

Das Zeisswerk und die Carl-Zeiss-Stiftung in Jena. Ihre wissenschaftliche, technische und soziale Entwicklung und Bedeutung, für weitere Kreise dargestellt von Felix Auerbach (Prof. a.d. Universität). Pp. vi+124. (Jena: Gustav Fischer, 1903.)

THIS short popular account of the optical works in Jena will be of interest to a wide circle of readers. Of the successful application of science to industry no more striking illustration can be found than in the history of the Zeiss firm, with its aim of "scientific exactness and perfection of workmanship," while to many the description of the present organisation of the undertaking, and the socialistic features of the charter under which it is now controlled, will no less appeal.

The early efforts of Carl Zeiss towards the improvement of the microscope, his adoption of Abbe as scientific partner, and the revolution in the optical theory of the instrument due to Abbe's work, are dealt with in some detail. The need, emphasised by Abbe's investigations, of greater variety in the character of optical glass, to render possible the removal of the chief defects of lens systems, led to the foundation, in 1884, of the glass works of Otto Schott, and from this year we may date an enormous advance in the construction of optical instruments, with a further development of the Jena industry. This brings us to an account of the existing organisation, and a description of the main departments, with details and illustrations of many of the most important and best known instruments, as well as of the workshops and buildings.

The latter part of the work deals with the social and socialistic aspects of the present system of administration. In 1891, some four years after the death of Carl Zeiss, Abbe devised his rights of property in the optical and glass works to the undertaking itself, and originated the statute, under which, after receiving in 1896 the legal sanction of the Duke of Saxony, the "Carl-Zeiss-Stiftung" is now controlled. Particulars are given of the statutory standing of the employés, the system of profit-sharing, the regulation of hours of work, the pension scheme, as well as of institutions founded for the benefit of the workmen, and benefactions to the university and to the town.

In addition to Carl Zeiss and Abbe other personalities connected with the undertaking, Schott, Czapski, Straubel, Pulfrich, &c., are briefly characterised, and with these names may be also mentioned that of the old foreman, August Löber, to whom the firm is indebted for many improvements in technical detail.

Reasons Against the Theory of Evolution. By Thomas Woods, M.D., M.R.C.S.L., L.R.C.S.I., &c. Pp. viii+52. (London: W. R. Russell and Co., n.d.)

THE author of this booklet may have perfectly definite convictions as to the truth or falsity of the theory of evolution, but he has hardly succeeded in making his attitude towards the doctrine clear to his readers. His object, the preface informs us, is to notice some occurrences, said to be due to evolution, the contrivances for which must have been pre-arranged, and therefore could not have been the result of accidental circumstances. "If," he proceeds, "Evolution results from 'circumstances and surroundings,' pre-arrangement, of course, cannot have occurred, and if it can be shown that such pre-arrangement has in any instance taken place the whole thing must fall." This can only mean that the author considers himself in a position to disprove the existence of evolution *in toto*. But, on the other hand, we read that "if we regard Evolution as one of the means made use of, . . . we may not err." We do not see how these statements are to be reconciled.

Considering, however, the title of the essay, and the whole tone of the author's remarks, we shall probably be doing him no injustice if we put him down as a root and branch opponent of the theory as commonly understood. His leading argument appears to be this:—facts such as the grouping of the planets of the solar system, the freezing and boiling points of water, and, in the organic world, the provision made by nature for the welfare of unborn offspring, with other similar conditions, seem to stand in definite relation with the existence of life on the earth; these conditions must have been pre-arranged, and therefore evolution is impossible. It is scarcely necessary to point out that the argument is a *non sequitur*. In estimating the evidence for and against evolution, it is absolutely immaterial to inquire whether the conditions under which it is supposed to have taken place are or are not the result of "pre-arrangement." Dr. Woods claims in an appendix to have anticipated Favre and Silberman in laying the foundations of thermochemistry. It is unfortunate that in entering the lists of biological controversy he has omitted to acquaint himself with the elementary conditions of the evolutionary problem.

Lessons in Physics. By Lothrop D. Higgins, Ph.B. Pp. vii+379; with plates and diagrams. (Boston, U.S.A., and London: Ginn and Co., 1903.) Price 4s. 6d.

It is rather difficult to "place" this book. At the end there is a glossary in which (amongst more difficult ones) words are defined such as these:—absorb (to take in), alter (to change), constant (always the same), detect (to find out), enlarge (to make larger). Apparently, then, the pupil is not expected to be certain about words of two syllables. We, accordingly, look for great simplicity in the text, especially as the author in his preface trusts that the explanations "have been made with a care which should render them unusually clear and simple." We open the book at random at the first section on magnets, and find the following definition as the first sentence:—"A Magnet is a body so acted upon electrically that it has the power to exert magnetic force."

We open on p. 319, and we find Ohm's law based upon the relative values of E.M.F. and current in the primary and secondary of an induction coil.

We open again at p. 250, and learn, in explanation of the rainbow, that "the sunlight passes through some thin clouds whose particles of water refract the rays, and the spectrum is formed on other clouds or reflected to the eye."

The first 120 pages, on mechanics, appear to be the best part of the book. There are several remarkably pretty plates.

The Certainty of a Future Life in Mars. Being the Posthumous Papers of Bradford Torrey Dodd. Edited by L. P. Gratacap. Pp. iv+266. (New York: Brentano's, 1903.)

THE planet Mars has been the subject for many works of fiction, and in the present volume we have another addition to the list.

The main idea of the train of thought in these pages is that upon each planet the possibilities of development just attain to the margin of the next higher step in mental evolution. Thus in Venus the period of *sense* develops to the possibility of the period of *science*, but does not attain it. On the earth the period of *science* develops to that of *spirit*, while the latter is only reached in the planet Mars. On this assumption souls of different degrees move from planet to planet.

The chief characters in this story are Mr. Dodd, his wife and son (the author of these papers). The father and son work out a system of wireless telegraphy, and

after the death of the former, whose soul is transported to Mars, they get into communication with each other.

The posthumous papers consist of the record left by the son, who describes all their experiments, hopes, failures, successes, and, lastly, the extra-planetary wireless messages he received.

Those interested in this class of fiction can spend a pleasant hour or two over these pages.

On the Lakes of South-eastern Wisconsin. By Prof. N. M. Fenneman. *Bulletin* viii. of Wisconsin Geol. and Nat. History Survey. Pp. xv+178. (Madison, Wisconsin: Published by the State, 1902.)

THE preface and the introduction announce the object of this work. It is intended as a guide to the teacher of geology, and shows how the shores of these lakes may form beautiful illustrations of the principles of wave, current, and ice action. The first chapter gives a general account of the origin of such lakes, and the second is devoted to a general and more or less theoretical discussion of the geological agents at work. After this the lakes are taken up one by one, and it is shown how the various features of the shore have arisen. There are many very good and aptly chosen photographs, which bring out clearly the points mentioned in the text, and make the book interesting even to those who cannot see the lakes for themselves.

Most of the book is devoted to the features of the shores, but it is also shown how the hydrographic maps may be used to decipher the origin of the basins, and in the case of Lake Mendota there is an interesting discussion of the results obtained by dredging, which are said to indicate currents below the wave-base. The unpublished work of the director of the Survey, Dr. Birge, on the temperature of these lakes is also said to confirm these conclusions. We shall look forward to the publication of these temperature observations. E. R. W.

Malessere Agrario ed Alimentare in Italia. By Italo Giglioli, Direttore della R. Stazione Agraria di Roma, &c. Pp. lxxxii+797. (Portici, 1903.)

IN this work Prof. Giglioli has attempted a detailed survey of the agricultural state of Italy in comparison with other nations. He considers one by one the various branches of the industry, the production of wheat, maize, rice and other cereals, wine, fruit, olives and silk, eggs, butter, cheese and the many minor branches of rural activity which are possible in the climate of Italy. In each case a comparison is drawn between the conditions of the past and those which prevail to-day both in Italy and the chief competing countries. Both as an ardent patriot and a man of science, Prof. Giglioli is troubled by the increasing poverty of the rural districts as compared with the towns, especially when one travels out of the favoured northern provinces of Lombardy and Tuscany into middle and southern Italy. He indicates how the actual production of the land is declining, so that Italy with all its traditional farming skill and with the vast possibilities of its climate is coming to be more and more dependent upon other nations for food which could be grown within its own borders if only more intensive methods of cultivation were resorted to. Aggravated as the case is in parts of Italy by the poverty of the people and their entire dependence upon agriculture, the problem is one which all the west European States are being called upon to face; how can agriculture, which is a primitive industry, live in a highly civilised State against the competition of the great areas of virgin soil like Argentina or the North-West? To English economists who want an enlightened and temperate review of the situation in a nation not unlike our own we commend Prof. Giglioli's book.

NO. 1784, VOL. 69]

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

[The Editor does not hold himself responsible for opinions expressed by his correspondents. Neither can he undertake to return, or to correspond with the writers of, rejected manuscripts intended for this or any other part of NATURE. No notice is taken of anonymous communications.]

Does the Radio-activity of Radium depend upon its Concentration?

SOME experiments have recently been made to test whether the radio-activity of radium is influenced by the continuous bombardment to which it is subjected by its own radiations. In an article in this Journal on radium (April 30, 1903) Prof. J. J. Thomson suggested that the radio-activity of radium may possibly depend upon its degree of concentration, and that a given quantity of radium, diffused throughout a mass of pitchblende, may be less than when concentrated in a small mass. In order to test this point, measurements of the radio-activity of radium bromide were made when in the solid state and when diffused throughout the mass of a solution more than a thousand times the volume occupied by the radium compound.

Two tubes, closed at one end, were taken, in one of which was placed about a milligram of pure solid radium bromide and in the other a solution of radium chloride. The tubes were connected near the top by a cross tube, and the open ends were then sealed by a blowpipe.

Measurements of the radio-activity of the radium were made by means of an electroscope. The tubes, fixed on a stand, were placed in a definite position near an electroscope and the rate of discharge observed. This was due to the β and γ rays emitted by the radium, since the α rays were completely absorbed in the walls of the tube. By placing a lead screen 6 mm. thick between the tubes and the electroscope the rate of discharge was due to the γ rays alone.

After measurements of the activity had been made, the glass apparatus was tilted so as to allow the radium chloride to flow into the arm containing the radium bromide. This dissolved the radium, and part of the emanation was released and distributed itself throughout the tubes.

No appreciable change of the radio-activity of radium was observed over a month's interval. If the rate of production of the emanation, or the excited activity caused by it, had varied during the interval, a corresponding change would have been observed in the rate of discharge due to the γ rays, for other experiments have shown that the amount of γ rays is proportional to the amount of emanation present, provided measurements are made several hours after the introduction of the emanation into a vessel, in order to allow the excited activity to reach a maximum value. The rate of discharge due to the γ rays was somewhat diminished, but this was due to an increased absorption of the β rays by the solution, and not to a change in the rate of emission of these rays. On account of the great penetrating power of the γ rays, the increased absorption due to the presence of the solution was negligible.

Since, after solution, the radium bromide was diffused through a mass of solution at least 1000 times the bulk of the solid radium bromide, we may conclude that a distribution of the radiating matter over a thousand times its original volume has no appreciable influence on its radio-activity.

This experiment shows that, over the range investigated, the radio-activity of radium is not influenced by its own intense radiations. This result is in agreement with previous observations, for neither the radio-activity of any active product nor the rate of loss of its activity has been found to be affected by its degree of concentration.

It is thus improbable that the energy given out by radium is due to an absorption of an unknown external radiation which is similar in character to the radiations which are emitted. Experiments are in progress to test whether still further dilution of the radium solution produces any alteration in its radio-activity. E. RUTHERFORD.

McGill University, Montreal, December 18, 1903.

Relative Motion and Conservation of Energy.

I HAVE received a letter from a correspondent which has led me to think that certain points connected with elementary dynamics are very obscurely put forward in text-books and in elementary class teaching generally. Of these the following may be taken as examples:—